



Clean Energy Future Committee

December 20, 2019

8:00 – 9:30 a.m.

Arlington Town Hall, Lyons Hearing Room

Members present: Jim DiTullio (by phone), Ryan Katofsky, Ken Pruitt, Dave Levy, Marc Breslow, Emily Sullivan, Adam Chapdelaine, Dan Amstutz, Coralie Cooper, Dan Dunn (by phone), Shelly Dein.

Members not present: Pasi Miettinen, Nellie Aikenhead.

Additional participants: Jennifer Raitt, Director of Planning and Community Development and Ali Carter, Economic Development Coordinator.

The Meeting Convened at 8:05 a.m.

Minutes: Minutes from the 11/22/2019 meeting were unanimously approved as amended based on comments at the meeting.

Discussion of the Brookline ban on new natural gas hookups

Mr. Pruitt noted Brookline's new bylaw would ban new oil or gas piping into new buildings or structures that have undergone a major renovation ("gut rehab"). However, the bylaw will need to be upheld by the Attorney General's office before going into force. Regarding exemptions in the Brookline Law, Mr. Pruitt noted the following as the most notable:

- a. For emergency backup generators
- b. For cooking appliances
- c. For domestic hot water in buildings greater than 10,000 square feet
- d. For needed repairs of gas piping that has become unsafe.

Mr. Katofsky asked why town bylaws need Attorney General approval. Mr. Chapdelaine noted all town bylaws need Attorney General approval to ensure compliance with state laws and the state constitution. Mr. Chapdelaine noted the Town Clerk of Brookline has 30 days to submit the bylaw and then the Attorney General's office has 90 days to review it.

Mr. Chapdelaine and Planning and Community Development Director Jenny Raitt noted the Brookline bylaw does allow for waivers. Ms. Raitt noted she is a Brookline resident and played a role in reviewing the bylaw in her volunteer role on Brookline's Housing Advisory Board.

Mr. Pruitt asked if the Committee thought the proposed bylaw made sense for Arlington to adapt and adopt. Mr. Chapdelaine stated that he was aware of town residents who were prepared to file a warrant article, and thought it would make sense for the Committee to file it and work with advocates for its adoption. Mr. Chapdelaine did note that this kind of bylaw cannot supersede the building code. Further, a legal challenge to this warrant article (and others) is likely even if approved. So, given the likelihood of legal challenges, the Brookline warrant article may well be under Attorney General and legal review during and after Arlington's Town Meeting.

Ms. Cooper supported pursuing drafting of a warrant article and noted the Brookline submission had a nice background of technical work and analysis. Mr. Katofsky seconded Ms. Cooper's motion that the Committee should review it. Ms. Dein agreed and noted her surprise that there are exemptions for cooking appliances.

Mr. Pruitt elaborated more on the Brookline bylaw by observing that it applies to both new construction and renovations altering 50% (commercial) or 75% (residential) of the original square footage of buildings.

Mr. Chapdelaine noted that if the Committee felt a Brookline-style bylaw was worthy of discussion, a vote would need to be taken in January ahead of the January 31 deadline for filing warrant articles. Mr. Dunn noted Select Board hearings would then be needed on the warrant article prior to Town Meeting.

Audience member Mr. Gene Benson supported new construction measures, including a natural gas ban, as well as requiring solar on new construction and electric charging stations at certain buildings. Ms. Dein noted the Building Code might be amended soon to address some of these issues.

Mr. Levy asked if the Committee should create a fact finding group in preparation for the January meeting. Mr. Chapdelaine agreed it would be a good idea. Ali Carter, Arlington's Economic Development Coordinator, noted that vacant storefronts are a common concern that could be worsened if further expensive requirements were placed on restaurants (such as requiring electric cooking appliances).

Ms. Raitt noted that Brookline residents went through a thorough process in shopping around the proposed warrant article in Brookline and suggested copying a similar process for this effort. Ms. Cooper noted that on restaurants, the technology is there, but the cost may be prohibitive. Ms. Carter concurred on the cost, and again noted how expensive it is to operate a restaurant today.

Mr. Katofsky noted that new homes should also be ready for new electric vehicle charging stations (not pre-installed, but pre-wired).

Audience member John Winslow noted he is completely in support of these measures but also noted the pain involved potentially in increased operating

costs. Mr. Katofsky noted that while there might be pain, we all will be on the journey together. Ms. Carter noted that the majority of businesses are not owned by Town residents.

Mr. Chapdelaine recommended that the Committee now work on the possible drafting of a warrant article for and during the January Committee meeting. There was general agreement.

Review of building-related greenhouse gas mitigation measures from MAPC.

The committee returned to the proposed list, which it partially reviewed at the November 22 meeting.

Regarding item number 18, Advance Energy Efficiency in Affordable Housing, Mr. Dunn noted concern that other groups were already potentially looking at this, so there is a risk of duplication. Mr. Chapdelaine noted the Town has “carrots” in the form of state and federal money that could help shape energy efficiency efforts so noted the idea seemed worthy.

Regarding items 19 and 20, decreasing energy use in Municipal Buildings, the Committee wondered if the ask is fossil fuel usage or energy use writ large (including electricity). The Committee thought prioritization of less efficient buildings made the most sense. The Committee discussed working with the Arlington Housing Authority to examine its building stock and noted it was a separate measure vs. Town buildings.

Regarding item 21, Meet municipal electricity demand with renewable energy sources, the Committee noted the Town government could meet energy demand with renewable electricity, and should be able to advance this measure in the near future when the electricity supply contract expires in December 2023.

Regarding items 22 & 23, “Facilitate private sector challenge programs for energy efficiency in buildings” and “Implement new financing programs for energy efficiency, renewables and infrastructure,” the Committee noted that perhaps it might be too complicated for a Town to facilitate a private sector financing program.

Regarding item 24, building energy benchmarking, Mr. Pruitt noted it was very resource intensive to set this up. Ms. Cooper noted that maybe this is a tier-2 priority. The Committee agreed.

Regarding item 25, requiring solar readiness for new buildings, the Committee decided this idea was worth further consideration and added EV readiness.

Regarding item 26, Implement community solar projects at scale, the Committee agreed that more solar, especially over parking lots would be a

benefit. However, the Committee felt that there might not be many community solar opportunities within Arlington since it is largely built-out.

Regarding item 27, create energy resource centers, the Committee noted this was largely already being done and we could just point people to good websites.

Regarding item 28, promote building decarbonization through incentives and demonstration projects, the Committee felt it should not be providing incentives, but perhaps could promote demonstration projects. The Committee did not favor including this item in the Net Zero Plan at this time.

Item 29 – blank line, skipped by the Committee.

Regarding item 30, easing of zoning to allow building replacement on non-conforming lots, the Committee noted this concept is viable but needs a lot further discussion to refine it.

Regarding item 31, creation of an Arlington Net Zero Energy Homes branding campaign, the Committee liked the concept and wanted to explore it further.

Regarding items 32 and 33, architect and realtor outreach, the Committee liked both concepts. The Committee noted it would have to provide outreach regarding how to handle design to avoid fossil fuel usage. Mr. Pruitt noted the Town of Winchester is investigating a webpage offered by the Town to support such a measure.

Regarding item 34, procure renewable gas, the sense of the Committee was to continue to monitor such an endeavor, but noted that at present it is infeasible.

Regarding item 35, Moratorium on new natural gas connections, it was noted that this measure is currently under consideration by the Committee as a potential Town Meeting warrant article.

Regarding Item 36, advocate for a lifting of the ban on new municipal light plants, the Committee was in favor of it.

Next Meeting will occur on January 31, 2020

The Meeting adjourned at 9:35 a.m.

Submitted by Dave Levy.